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ABSTRACT

An examination of honors courses in speech education provides the basis for this collection of articles by (1) Jack C. Gilbert, who justifies providing, through college honors courses, "the best education for the best students," (2) Owen Peterson, who explains the organization and taching of a college honors course in the fundamentals of speech, (3) Donald Hill, who discusses some aspects of a 4-year interdisciplinary program in humanitites and theater arts at Muskingum College in Ohio, (4) D. Ray Heisey, who states the emphasis and materials used in a college level course in argumentation, and (5) Freda Kenner, who presents a rationale for an honors course at the high school level and discusses its organization and goals. (JM)

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HONORS COURSES: A SYMPOSIUM

Jack G. Gilbert

I. HONORS FOR THE BEST

THE formula for honors programs is a simple one: teaching in the best way those best able to learn. Ignoring for the moment the questions (1) who are best able to learn and (2) what is the best way to teach, I might put the formula in focus by means of an imaginary example. Suppose a music school—with a crescendo enrollment—resorts to familiar procedures in eking out its limited resources. The size of sections increases from a handful to a roomful. Finally spending less and less time with the truly talented, instructors lecture before hundreds of students *about* the playing of instruments. Perhaps the topics include "what the piano experience is really like." The example is too grotesque to pursue.

No music school is in danger of development in such a direction. In music, distinctions in merit are too clear to ignore—they are audible. The student must have a high aptitude to learn. Much time must be spent in laboratory and tutorial sessions. And the teacher must be talented too, a master of the instruments he teaches. Music enjoys a privileged status, wherein the aristocratic principle—teaching of the best, by the best, in the best way—is immediately recognized as appropriate and necessary.

But the students flooding our campuses bring distinct excellences other than the musical, aptitudes for achievement in chemistry, English, history, mathematics, physics, speech. The fact of excellence does not need demonstration. Each teacher recalls a truly brilliant student, one perhaps brighter than his teachers, as often happens. Does not this student, like the musically gifted student, deserve special identification and special instruction? I recall the view of a high school principal—a kindly, amiable educator—that the very bright, being best able to fend for themselves, were least in need of the care of their teachers. It is as if teaching were a practice of medicine wherein the healthy are of little concern.

Particularly in the last decade our society's concern for excellence has become clear enough. We have come to realize that capacity for learning is a most valuable natural resource and that simple justice requires the fullest development of those most capable of development. Elaborate national testing services seek out annually the very brightest students; colleges and universities compete for the enrollment of the most promising. Besides entrance tests, many schools and honors programs conduct interviews to find, hopefully by greater care, the creative, imaginative student who may not always "test" high. Personality surveys, like OAIS,[1] have proved useful to some honors programs in identifying those likely to succeed in honors courses. And, after students are enrolled in college, excellent grades often qualify them for admission to honors courses and programs.

There is also, I think, substantial agreement as to the best way to teach

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1 See B. G. Fricke, "The OAIS Test and Testing Program," *The Superior Student* (March-April 1965), pp. 44-50.

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the brightest students, once they are identified. Small seminars, albeit expensive and (some say) inefficient, have long been preferred by teacher and student. As one writer[2] recently pointed out, students (and I would add, from my own experience, *especially bright students*) increasingly deplore the following in their educational fare: "little excitement in learning, little relevance in learning, little impact from learning, little sense of community in learning, little devotion to dialogue and individual expression in learning, little inquiry in learning and little genuine purpose in learning." This staggering complaint, with key phrases such as "little sense of community" and "little devotion to dialogue," cannot be made against an honors program which is based on small seminars. Much student unrest—all too often led by the brightest students—derives from a sense of frustration, a lack of involvement. This generation, unlike the less activistic, perhaps apathetic, students of the 1950's, seems convinced that it does not adequately participate in education. Myriads of students complain of the problem created by myriads of students: impersonality, herding, mass education. I think it is possible to save, within an honors program, the community of purpose which properly exists between teacher and student. It is possible and necessary to preserve within the multiversity the atmosphere and the advantages of a small liberal arts college, by means of honors courses and honors programs for the best students.

Besides seminars, the other elements in "best teaching" are familiar. Interdisciplinary courses follow the ideas wherever they go, regardless of provincial departmentalized lines. Honors students flourish in a system of freedom which allows for independent reading, intensive counseling and tutoring, and independent research, which leads at many colleges and universities to the honors thesis.

I have neglected, however, that most important element, the good teacher. Before describing this pedagogical knight, perhaps I should mention the ogres, giants, and dragons against which he wages a sometimes desperate battle. This generation of university professors betrays an increasing concern for the signs of status: salary, graduate instruction, reduced teaching loads, grants, Fulbrights, secretaries, laboratory assistants, and even elegant quarters. It is as if we have finally decided to demand of our society the trappings of professional status long denied us. Just as this is, it often results in the teacher's misplacing his efforts, with the hope that the signs of inherent value will by a metonymic reversal bring the value and achievement too. Also, a professor today tends to see his success as dependent on publication, on training graduate students, on recognition by specialists in his field, on the good will of his department. What has the proper teaching of bright students in honors seminars or interdisciplinary colloquia necessarily to do with these? The connection, some may insist, is obvious. Yet every director of honors knows how hard it is to pry some of the best teachers away from favorite departmental pursuits and to encourage a little effort for honors undergraduates.

Despite these forces of the multiversity, commitment to honors instruction persists. In the tradition of the Academy or the Lyceum—relics in short of a primitive uneconomical pedagogic technology—professors in the humanities and the sciences direct their efforts to relevance in learning, to meaningful dialogue (or to what the

2 J. M. Bevan, "The Deanship," *Liberal Education* (October 1967), p. 346.

student is willing to accept as meaningful dialogue), to training the best students in the best way. Among my teachers and colleagues, I have been fortunate in knowing a few of these rare and gifted professors, who truly have something to profess. It seems to me that they combine the following abilities and characteristics: they have or have retained a youthful zest for learning; they are willing to venture on uncharted seas of the mind and to err; however skilled in a speciality, they have kept an interest in the broader aspects of the world and of the world of the mind; they feel a concern for the personality as well as for the knowledge of their students; they have the ability to teach by means of dialogue; and they do not avoid the ultimate issues of our civilization.

There can be little doubt that this country's commitment to mass education is ongoing, necessary, and productive. There can be little doubt that economic pressures will continue to influence greatly, if not control, the makers of educational policy. There can be little doubt that faculty members will be more and more distracted from a concern for teaching undergraduates. In view of such grand and critical, perhaps inexorable, movements of history, to plea for the special care of our brightest students will seem to some futile and utopian. But our culture has decided it can afford music schools and music. Similarly, I would suggest, we can afford the expense of the best education for our best students. The cost, in view of the gain, is very slight.

SYMPOSIUM:

Owen Peterson

II. TEACHING THE HONORS COURSE IN FUNDAMENTALS OF SPEECH

A growing awareness of the special needs, interests, and abilities of the superior student has led to the development in recent years of honors courses, honors curricula, and honors divisions in an increasing number of colleges and universities. With this trend has come a demand for public address courses for the student of unusual scholastic aptitude. These courses, while stimulating to teach, require special insights, skills, and approaches if they are to achieve their intended objectives. The purpose of this paper is to examine three questions posed by an honors course in public address: (1) Who should be permitted to enroll? (2) How do such courses differ from regular classes in the same subject? (3) What are some of the special demands which honors courses place upon the teacher?

The first step in developing a public address honors course is to determine what type of student will be admitted. Should the course serve the superior student, the superior speaker, or both? Although the intellectually gifted student and the skillful speaker may at first appear to have much in common, actually the needs and talents of the two differ sharply. Many outstanding scholars enter college with little knowledge or experience in speaking. On the other hand, high school graduates with a good background in speech not infrequently are blessed with only moderate intellectual prowess. Because of this disparity in skill and ability, it is difficult to devise a course which will satisfy the needs of both groups.

Faced with the decision of determining which group the honors courses would serve at Louisiana State University, the Department of Speech chose to base eligibility solely on scholastic ability. To be admitted to the beginning Fundamentals of Speech honors sections, entering freshmen must rank in the 95th percentile or above on the American College Test and must score in at least the 90th percentile on the English part of the same examination. Other students are required to have a 3.0 (B) university grade average. For honors courses in speech above the freshman level, students must have a 3.0 average or have earned a grade of A or B in the freshman honors course.

Once eligibility requirements have been set, consideration must be given to what the course will cover. The Department of Speech at Louisiana State University presently offers sections of Fundamentals of Speech at the freshman level, Public Speaking for sophomores and above, and a course in Contemporary Public Address[1] which is open only

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[1] The purpose of this course is to provide honors students with an understanding and appreciation of the uses, types, and effectiveness of public address in contemporary society. Attention is given to legal liabilities and ethical responsibilities of the speaker; contemporary political campaigning, including the use of television, ghostwriters, and public relations agencies; controversy on the campus; the techniques of minorities and pressure groups; religious speaking; and problems of communication attendant upon the scientific-technological breakthrough in the twentieth century.

to honors students of sophomore standing or higher. For purposes of comparison and contrast with non-honors classes, this paper focuses on the honors sections of the Fundamentals of Speech course. Units of study in this course include the role of speech in a democratic society, the nature and purposes of oral communication, selecting subjects, organizing materials, vocal and physical aspects of delivery, speech content, and language. In order to provide each student with an opportunity for several speaking performances, enrollment is limited to twenty students, which is approximately the number enrolled in regular sections.

Some of the same subject matter is covered in both honors and regular sections of the fundamentals course. The major differences in content result from the abilities and aptitudes of the honors students. Compared to the typical undergraduate, the honors student usually is more strongly motivated and displays greater confidence in his own ability. Furthermore, regardless of whether he has any prior speech training, he is likely to possess a wide range of knowledge and interests, skill in organization, a superior vocabulary, and an inquiring mind. In spite of the general superiority of the student in the honors class, however, the instructor will discover that the incidence of nervousness, stage fright, and problems of voice, articulation, and bodily control is almost the same as for other undergraduates. Nevertheless, because of his intellectual capacity the honors student usually is able to master the basic theory and techniques of effective public address in far less time than must be devoted to these concepts in regular sections. This is one of the most important differences between honors and regular sections, for it means that the instructor has considerable time for the introduction of material not normally covered in the course.

In devising and implementing specific assignments, the honors instructor must make certain that the readings and exercises truly challenge his students, that the assignments are well adapted to the special interests and talents of the class members, and that his evaluation of the student's work is equitable.

A common danger in developing assignments for honors classes, especially if the instructor has previously taught regular sections of the same course, is that the readings and exercises will be too easy. The teacher must be careful not to underestimate the abilities of the honors student. Compared to other undergraduates, the honors student can, and should, be expected to read more, to comprehend more abstract material, to express himself better, and to extend his range of knowledge beyond the minimal requirements of the course. On the other hand, the instructor can overestimate the maturity of his students. While they can be expected to engage in a certain amount of self-directed study, the instructor cannot turn them loose on an independent study program and expect them to handle it as a graduate student might. They need direction and supervision in the form of specific assignments, reading lists, progress reports, and deadlines.

While the teacher should provide the honors student with careful guidance, he will find it necessary to be highly flexible and permissive in his approach. Because he is dealing with gifted students, the instructor will discover that his class members are far more individualistic than the typical undergraduate. They are perceptive, imaginative, critical, discriminating, and demanding. They are more likely than the average student to question the word of the instructor, to disagree with the textbook

author, to reject the dogmatic assertion, and to criticize the ideas of their fellow students. If he is to be effective, the honors teacher must recognize these differences, adapt to them, and attempt to shape the course to the students' special attitudes and qualities. Among the assignments which have been tried at Louisiana State in an effort to challenge the talents of this group are supplemental readings, special projects, research papers, outside speaking performances, problems in speech criticism, studies of speaking on campus and in the community, recording and listening assignments, surveys, and talks by visiting speakers.

A final consideration in teaching the honors class is the instructor's method for evaluating and grading student work. Assigning grades in an honors course often is considerably more difficult than in a regular class. Ideally, a student in an honors class should receive a grade which is neither higher nor lower than that which he would have earned in a regular section with a comparable expenditure of effort and intelligence. Since all of the students in an honors section are known to be of superior ability, one would expect most of them to earn high grades. However, lacking a representative sample the teacher often finds it difficult to determine whether the student's work actually is superior and, if so, how superior to the typical student. Furthermore, from time to time the instructor will have students whose work definitely is inferior to that of the rest of the honors group. The difficulty then is to decide how inferior his work is and whether it is poor enough that he would have earned only a C or perhaps even a D or F in a regular section of the course. If honors courses are to function properly within the framework of a department, it is important that the instructor resolve these questions about grading. Enrollment in an honors course should never be a guarantee of a high grade; on the other hand, honors students should not be penalized simply because they are competing with other highly gifted students.

Teaching the honors course in public address can be a joy and a challenge to the teacher of speech. However, he must be aware of the special characteristics and abilities of his students and be constantly alert to adapt to their unusual aptitudes and needs.

SYMPOSIUM:

Donald Hill

III. HONORS IN THEATRE

Honors in theatre at Muskingum College is presently being approached through the Junior Humanities Colloquium as an interdepartmental study. To understand what that statement involves, it is necessary to explain the structure of the Honors Program.[1]

The purpose of Muskingum's Honors Program is similar to that of programs in other institutions: to permit and encourage the superior student to develop to the fullest extent his intellectual and creative potential. Since this purpose is not always fulfilled in regular courses, opportunities are offered that assist the student to develop scholarship abilities and creative talents, that enable him to relate his major studies to other areas of knowledge, and that permit him to explore in depth his own area of interest.

Now in its second year at Muskingum, the program begins with a freshman colloquium of a general nature and each succeeding year becomes narrower in scope until the senior year limits a student's study to his major department. All colloquia meet once every two weeks for two hours, using selected readings, themes, research papers, and discussion as means of evaluation. In the senior year an individual project and a comprehensive examination in the major are the main evaluative activities. Just as the colloquia become narrower in subject field as the student approaches his major and final work of the senior year, so each successive colloquium is designed to become more student-centered as the members mature: in the freshman year, the instructors may very well carry most of the discussions; in the sophomore year, students are expected to begin to manipulate the discussions themselves; by the junior year the student should be able to maneuver within guidelines set up by the participating instructors, and by the senior year he should complete a project on his own.

Under the guidance of an Honors Council composed of a director and four faculty members who are administratively appointed in different years, continuity, organization, and evaluation of the program are assured. Each of the four classes represented in the honors program elects a fellow to take part in making decisions of the Council and to offer an evaluation of the program at the end of each academic year.

Students who have a grade point ratio of 3.0 (A = 4.0) may enter the program as late as the junior year; exceptions are made for the especially talented whose g.p.r. is below the suggested level. Freshmen participants are decided by evaluation of high school work, the usual battery of college entrance tests, and promise. No grades are given in the general honors colloquia, but membership is entered on a student's transcript. In senior honors courses within departments a "B" average must be maintained; such grades are determined by the faculty responsible for the courses. Students whose work does not prove satisfactory according to the standards

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[1] The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of the late Edith Miller, who did much of the preparatory work for Honors at Muskingum, John McKenney, former Director of the Honors Council, and William McClelland, present Director.

of the Honors Council are dropped from the program.

The offerings in honors for the first semester of 1967-1968 include five colloquia. A freshman colloquium, "The Identity of the Individual," is related to the Basic Education program, is quite general in nature, and involves forty students and four professors. A sophomore colloquium, "Morality and Foreign Policy," is an interdisciplinary study developed by the Religion and History Departments and engages twelve students. There are three junior colloquia since subjects are limited to content within various divisions of the college in order to channel the students toward their chosen field of concentration: in the Arts Division seven students are enrolled in "Pursuit of the Baroque"; in the Humanities division eleven students are registered for "Bertolt Brecht"; and in the Science Division five students study the "History and Philosophy of Mathematica." Three seniors are engaged in recital work for honors in Music.

The Bertolt Brecht Colloquium represents a joint effort of the German, Philosophy, and Speech departments. The suggestion came from Dr. John McKenney, former director of the program, and Associate Professor of Philosophy; Dr. Charlotte Evans, Associate Professor of German, and I immediately voiced our interest. Brecht seemed a particularly good subject for interdisciplinary or, as in this case, interdepartmental study. His life and work, so inextricably bound, possess implications—philosophical, political, social, literary, and theatrical—capable of enlisting and holding the attention of a group of students having the most widely scattered or even conflicting interests. Brecht has produced a considerable body of work, and enough time has passed to prove this work significant and meaningful. Trapped between two great ideologies of our time, Communism and Democracy, Brecht developed a way of voicing his frustration that led to a new aesthetic for the theatre. Student unfamiliarity with his work and the fact that he is not encountered in formal course work made Brecht an excellent subject for a colloquium.

To provide organization and insure content coverage of important facets of the subject, a schedule of general topics and their respective dates was offered to students before the end of the 1967 spring semester. They signed up for topics which interested them and had the summer to prepare for a discussion of a particular phase of that topic and a research paper which would be filed in the library at the end of the semester's work. A copy of the first semester schedule is supplied below:

September 13—Short introductory meeting. No preparation necessary. Assignment for next meeting: selected poems and the drama *Baal* for all to read.

September 20—Students will read and interpret their respective poems. Discussion of *Baal* by all.

October 4—Brecht's Life. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. Evans.

October 18—Sociological, philosophical and political commitments of Brecht. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. McKenney.

November 1—Brecht's theories on the theatre. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Mr. Hill.

November 8—Tentative date for showing of German movie: *Threepenny Opera*.

November 15—*Threepenny Opera* will be discussed. All students should have read the play and also listened to the opera. Discussion leader: Mr. Hill.

November 29—A comparative study of *Drums in the Night*: English and German versions. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. Evans.

In the Jungle of Cities. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. McKenney.

December 13—*Man Equals Man*. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. McKenney.

Comparative study of *Leben Eduards Des Zweiten* and Marlowe's *Edward II*. Report and discussion. Faculty Advisor: Dr. Evans.

January 10—Tentative date for showing of movie, *Kuhle Wampe* (*Whither Germany*).

January 17—*Kuhle Wampe* discussed jointly. Discussion leader: Mr. Hill.

No topics for the second semester were suggested with the hope that after one semester, the students would be sufficiently involved that they would develop their own areas of investigation for research and discussion. On January 31, each student devised a general topic related to his interest as well as to areas covered in previous colloquia. The result was thematic studies in self-realization derived from the Brecht Colloquium. These general topics, which research refined to more specific subjects, were:

"Man's Search for Identity," a religious and psychological study with reference to Frankl, Sartre, and Brecht

"Man's Relationship to Authority," involving such specific works as *The Grapes of Wrath, To Kill a Mocking Bird, Billy Budd,* and *The Caucasian Chalk Circle*

"Man versus Society," a socio-psychological study using such work as *The Art of Loving, Top of the World, Stern,* and *Baal*

"Man and Religion" with reference to *Stranger in a Strange Land,* and *Galileo*

"Man's Conflict with Man," as shown in *Zoo Story, Becket,* and *In the Jungle of Cities*

"Man's Search for Himself," a psychological investigation involving *Herzog, The Last Analysis, Three Faces of Eve, Sadartha,* and *Man Is Man*

"Man and the State," political implications of the *Communist Manifesto, Power, The Mother,* and *The Measures Taken*

An extensive paperback library of plays, poetry, and commentaries was made available to students through the bookstore so that they could have them over the summer for background readings. Of course, the Main Library supplied primary reference materials in both German and English, as well as various periodicals for research. Supplementary aids to discussion were provided through eight recordings of Brecht's plays and poetry; the two films used in connection with the colloquium have already been mentioned. An exhibition on the life and works of Brecht, "Brecht Inter-Nationes," was erected for the entire community to view in the Student-Faculty Center by its creator Professor Edmund P. Hecht, Chairman Department of Germanic Languages and Literature at Kenyon College. Professor Hecht and one other authority were tentatively scheduled to visit the colloquium the second semester. Advanced students in directing and acting presented some of the shorter plays and poetry in a readers' theatre performance; and *Mother Courage and Her Children* was included on the Little Theatre's production schedule so that students might have the opportunity of seeing and working with the Brechtian style.

I have personally been challenged and culturally stimulated by association with exceptional students and fellow professors; this too is an important objective of honors programs. I am enthusiastic about the promise of the Honors Program, the opportunities for learning it provides outside the regular curricula.

SYMPOSIUM:

D. Ray Heisey

IV. AN HONORS COURSE IN ARGUMENTATION

William Kessen, chairman of the Yale College Course of Study Committee, has said, "The central task of undergraduate education and the central goal of educational reform is to enlarge and deepen the relevant exchange between scholar and student."[1] Providing a model for this type of exchange is one of the significant contributions which honors courses can make to the total university community.

At Kent State University, Speech 264H, the honors course in argumentation, is one example among many on campus of such an educational encounter.[2] The course is offered for five hours credit each year in the Spring quarter. It is limited to ten students formally enrolled in the Honors College of the University[3] and is open to non-speech majors as well as to speech majors.

Aim. Since this is an honors section, the emphasis is not on performance in classroom debate, but on the development of an informed and critical mind in the investigation, analysis, and evaluation of controversial issues both in the academic community and in society at large. It is a philosophical inquiry into the nature and function of critical thinking, or reason in discourse, by truth-seeking citizens in a free society.[4]

Approach. The course is thus less structured than are the regular argumentation classes and of course is adapted to the special interests, high motivation, and superior ability of the honors students. One of the primary ways in which this adaptation may be seen is in the classroom approach. There are no lectures. The premise is that capacity for intellectual discourse is best promoted by the seminar, where everyone in the group is engaged in highly critical judgment and sustained dialogue. The Socratic conversation provides the means by which precision of thought, clarification of ideas, release from self-deception, and unremitting search for truth are obtained. Sitting informally around a table, students are challenged to advance and defend their ideas among themselves and with the professor.

Materials. Using the general theme, "Students, the University, and Society," students are encouraged to think independently and to choose their own issues, as well as to engage in critical

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1 William Kessen, "The Student in Search of an Education," *Yale Alumni Magazine* (May 1967), 29-37.

2 Because it is an honors course and because of the dynamic nature of the educational process, it should be stated that the course described here will vary in aim, approach, and materials used each time it is taught. The description in this paper pertains to the course as it is in progress at the time of writing (Spring quarter, 1968). It does not, of course, include all the readings or all the projects undertaken, only representative ones.

3 Established in 1965, the Honors College of Kent State University is "a special four-year program of undergraduate study which has as its objective the seeking out and nurturing of the minds of highly-motivated students who desire and are able to pursue academic work of an individualized, integrated, and enriched nature." *Honors College,* Kent, Ohio, May 1966, p. i.

4 The term "critical thinking" is used in this paper as that intellectual process of examining the evidence pertaining to a precisely-stated problem, weighing the significance of the facts, and arriving at a judgment or course of action based upon this persistent, ordered inquiry.

analysis of relevant problems presented in selected essays, speeches, and discussions. For example, during a discussion of Brand Blanshard's address, "Education as Philosophy," in which Blanshard argues for a "larger infusion of the philosophic habit of mind,"[5] one of the students, in commenting on the kind of education found at the University, brought up the idea of a professor-course evaluation by students, such as is done at other institutions. The class responded with considerable enthusiasm to a discussion of such a system, brought in materials on the subject, and began talking in terms of establishing a system at their own institution. When it was discovered that two of the students were members of Student Senate and that one had previously been a member who had worked on a professor-course appraisal proposal, the author encouraged the group to investigate the feasibility of establishing a system at Kent State University and to examine the programs at other universities more carefully. The students made their own assignments and assumed complete initiative in checking the financial implications and the logistics involved, calling in experts from the University's computer and examination aids centers to advise on the setting up of appropriate forms. They drew up a formal bill, with preambles and resolutions establishing a Commission to implement the program, to be presented on the floor of the senate by the two senators in the class. Some of the most vigorous and fruitful interchange of ideas on this subject resulted when the group was asked to anticipate potential questions, objections, and arguments against the plan from the senate floor and to prepare replies to these arguments. The students appeared to achieve a more thorough understanding of the issues involved and a sharpened capacity to engage in discriminating inquiry.

Materials selected by the instructor for critical examination include a series of audio tapes issued by the Center for the Study of Democratic Institutions in Santa Barbara.[6] The tapes present in lecture and discussion form the contributions made by visiting experts in Santa Barbara and the Center's own Senior Fellows who respond to the statements in vigorous dialogue. Titles of some of the tapes include "Merchants of Phony Issues" by Thomas Braden, "Education for Freedom" by Alexander Meiklejohn, "Education: For What and for Whom?" by Robert M. Hutchins and others, "Communication in a Democracy" by Frank McCulloch, and "Don't Make Waves" by Jules Feiffer, Edward P. Morgan, and Paul Jacobs. The tapes, along with printed materials published by the Center, provide an excellent reservoir of resources, for both content and method, particularly for an honors course in argumentation.

As thought and dialogue move in the classroom from the issues relating to the student and the campus to the larger society, we take up G. Lowes Dickinson's *A Modern Symposium*, "A remarkable imaginary roundtable, revealing in lively debate over ideologies, the basic roots of political and social discord."[7] Dickinson juxtaposes the thinking of thirteen different men who view society

[5] This address, originally delivered at Swarthmore in February, 1945, is reprinted in Robert L. Shurter and John R. Pierce, *Critical Thinking: Its Expression in Argument* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1966), pp. 244-256.

[6] The Center, under the leadership of Robert M. Hutchins, is a small but influential intellectual community "devoted to clarifying basic issues confronting a democratic society. Its prejudice is democracy; its operating procedure, the dialogue." It publishes *The Center Magazine* and occasional papers based on conferences held there.

[7] One of a series in the *Milestones of Thought in the History of Ideas*, published by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., Inc., New York, 1962. The quotation is taken from the subtitle.

and the role of reasonable men in that society from their respective positions and who formulate their individual rationales for the deliberation of civilized minds.

Students are asked to write a paper on the argument which they feel is best developed in the symposium and why, and then to prepare a statement on how the thirteen men, who represent a conservative, a liberal, an anarchist, a professor, a scientist, a journalist, a poet, etc., each would view two contemporary issues: the problem of the ghetto and the war in Vietnam. The students criticize and evaluate one another's papers and oral arguments, thus exercising their own critical judgment as to what constitutes a good and valid argument as well as synthesizing the philosophical readings with problems in society which they are thinking about.

In a final project the students select a particular issue from the general theme of "Students, the University, and Society," for more intensive investigation and inquiry. A proposition is formulated and a brief constructed, and opportunity is given for a formal argumentative encounter with the other members of the group, including the professor.

Upon a purely subjective level, it may be stated that student reaction to the emphasis and general approach used in the course has been favorable. Students have responded with imagination and enthusiasm to the opportunity of engaging one another in critical dialogue on significant controversial issues with a view to developing inquiring and discriminating minds. An attempt is underway to establish an objective response to the course.

SYMPOSIUM:

Freda Kenner

V. AN HONORS COURSE IN HIGH SCHOOL

Five years ago one of our senior counselors at Messick High School suggested that we have an accelerated course in beginning speech. She reported that we had enrolled in our school gifted students who needed to be involved in debate and drama with a challenge. We set up the course. It was so successful that two years later we offered a second year class. The second year class was found to be necessary because the students who wished to continue their speech study seemed lost when they were scattered throughout the regular classes. They missed the challenge of their fellows.

There were two main ways that we screened the students. The first was the standardized objective test of intelligence and achievement. The second was the observation of teachers, parents, and other students. We found neither to be completely satisfactory when used alone, but they supplemented each other very well.

Almost every gifted-student program uses the observations and judgments of teachers in some stage of the screening. However, teachers' observations cannot be used exclusively because they are subjective, unstandardized, and of varying reliability. Teachers often mistake a pleasant personality, high academic achievement, and superior work habits for superior ability and sometimes mistake the lack of these for lack of ability.

A second source of observational data was the students themselves. They provide data about performance outside the classroom, about which the teacher may know very little unless she is unusually close to them.

Parents and other adults were important sources concerning general background. They supplied information through questionnaires, interviews, and conferences.

However, objective tests provided standardized data independent of the judgment of teachers or other adults. Various kinds of tests are used regularly in our school, and we went to them for a beginning when we started screening. We realized that creative thinking, intelligence, some aspects of scientific and mechanical ability, and talent in the fine arts are abilities most easily found by objective testing and least likely to be accurately screened by observation alone. These abilities show up in intensity of performance and here is where the speech program can render a service.

Although tests and observations are strong factors in the screening, any student interested may apply and is given an opportunity to be considered. There is no cut off point. If we did not leave the way open, we would miss some of our best dramatic talent because dramatic ability cannot always be screened accurately.

Our school is a one through twelve grade school and many of our students are members of our "twelve year club." Therefore, it is easy to spot speech and drama talent early and to guide the student toward an accelerated speech program. Our guidance counselors visit our "feeder schools" and screen the students coming to our school.

Students were enrolled in the speech program who would not have been if it

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had not been for the objective tests and the wisdom of the guidance counselors. For instance, they had the opportunity to observe a shy, timid student with a high IQ who needed speech and to channel him into debate, which is a challenge to any student. Here, the student had the opportunity to clash with abilities equal or beyond his own. We usually think of the shy student being helped by this type of program, but I have seen the other type—loud, raucous, caustic, and impolite—calm down and become a likeable personality.

All advanced or accelerated courses require extra work whether it is reading, reporting, writing, memory work, testing, or performance. I believe it is the performance that is the most challenging in the accelerated speech class. These gifted students vie with each other to excel. The class is a revelation, an unexpected pleasure, a joy not often found in the experience of a teacher.

The boy or girl interested in the theatre also has a better opportunity to advance because of the many plays read and designed, theatrical history studied and discussed, creative dramatics, and acting experiences open to them.

We have found the school to be a major help for gifted children because it is the best place for a program of discovery. You may ask, "Who is the gifted child?" We have considered any child "gifted" who is superior in some ability that can make him an outstanding contributor to society.

Some of the characteristics noted of the gifted child are (1) quickness of response, (2) eagerness to improve, (3) desire for approval, (4) high personal standards, (5) easily discouraged, (6) horror of not being able to live up to his own high vision, (7) critical ability to surpass his own ability to achieve, and (8) great appreciation of ideas and the arts.

These gifted students do not always respond to the same motivation, teaching methods, or materials used with the regular classes. It is necessary therefore to present activities and projects which challenge them; maintain a high standard of performance; maintain a classroom climate which will encourage initiative and creativity; and wherever possible give them the responsibility for carrying through projects and setting up criteria for the evaluation of performances.

We try to show the talented ones that they have a specially great obligation because they have more to offer society than the average ones can bring it. The talented ones should get more *from,* and give more *to* society. They should feel that their special talents are really *gifts* to them, of which they should make the most for the good of both society and themselves. The accelerated speech program offers just such an opportunity.

It is too early to run a scale on achievements reached by these students, although by word of mouth reports are most favorable. College grades are good and family reports are filled with praise.